

- 19 -

CLAIMS

1. A method for forming a solidified granular material (15) with granules bonded into a solid form, in a space within a frame member
5 (11) and/or a space enclosed by said frame member and a surrounding panel member, said method comprising the steps of:

mixing first granules (16) and second granules (17) together, each of said second granules having a thermoplastic resin shell (17c) enclosing a solid or liquid (17b) which expands by vaporization;
10

charging the mixture of said first and second granules into said frame member; and

heating said first granules and said second granules together with said frame member so as to soften said second
15 granules and make the same expand by internal pressures, as well as to melt surfaces of said second granules for bonding with said first granules.

2. A method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising, after
20 the heating step, the step of cooling said first granules and said second granules together with said frame member.

3. A method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said solid or liquid (17b) which expands by vaporization comprises a hydrocarbon of
25 low boiling point.

4. A method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said charging of the

- 20 -

mixture (20) of said first granules and said second granules into said frame member (11) is performed with said mixture packed in a bag (91) or a container (92).